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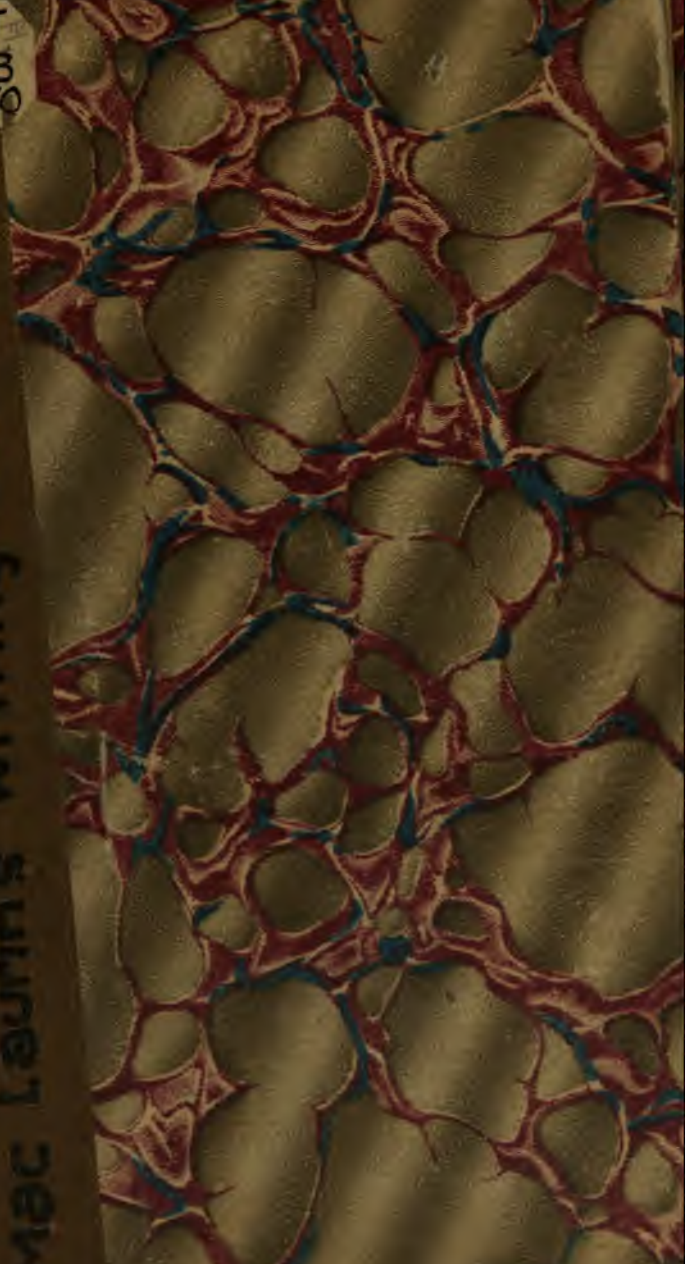
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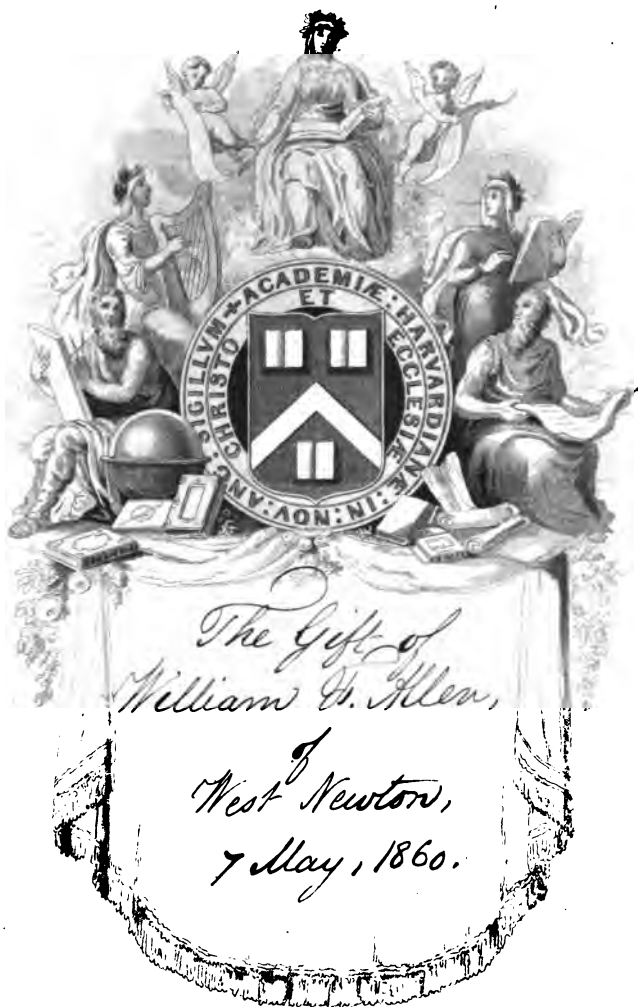
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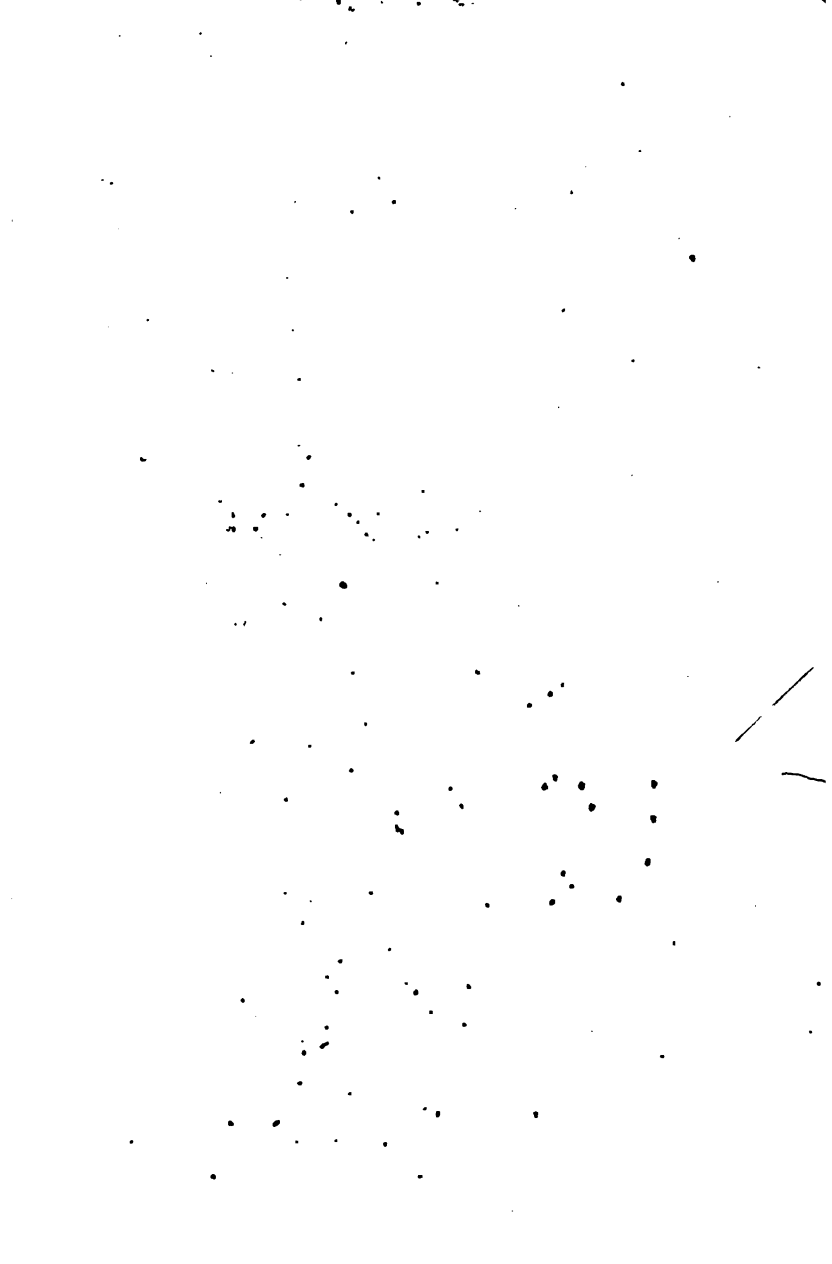
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SELF-INSTRUCTING WRITING BOOKS;

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A SPECIAL ADAPTATION OF THE SCHOOL SYSTEM
TO THE USE OF INDIVIDUALS WHO WISH TO ACQUIRE RAPIDITY AND ELE-
GANCE OF HANDWRITING, WITHOUT THE AID OF A TEACHER; AN
ENTIRELY NEW AND EMINENTLY SUCCESSFUL METHOD—ALSO,
INTENDED FOR THE ASSISTANCE OF TEACHERS WHO
WISH TO ACQUIRE THE ABILITY TO TEACH
THE SYSTEM THEMSELVES.

CIRCULAR TO LEARNERS AND TEACHERS.

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MAC LAURIN'S

SELF-INSTRUCTING WRITING BOOKS.

INTRODUCTION AND EXPLANATIONS.

THE Publisher of MacLaurin's System of Writing has been led, by the immense popularity which this system is acquiring in the schools of the country, to consider the possibility and desirableness of adapting the same system to the wants of the thousands of young men and ladies who are no longer at school, and who have, nevertheless, not acquired by their previous instructions, that necessary accomplishment, a *good* and *rapid* handwriting, such as would qualify them for the counting-house, for business in its various departments, or for easy and elegant correspondence.

The design above stated is a new one—that of enabling persons *to learn to write entirely without the aid of the living teacher*, a thing never heretofore attempted, and one which nothing but the

peculiar excellence of *this new system* could have rendered possible. The advantages which this system offers are such, however, that self-instruction becomes just as practicable in this branch of education, as in others in which so many young men and women are daily and successfully applying it. The attempt, though a complete novelty in education, is entirely successful, as has been demonstrated triumphantly in instances sufficiently numerous to put it beyond all question.

The fact is now known, that ANY PERSON can, *without the aid of a writing-teacher*, LEARN TO WRITE A RAPID AND HANDSOME BUSINESS HAND. The discovery is one of sufficient importance to command the attention of Educationists, and especially of young men in the city and country, who are purposing to enter into business of any kind.

The importance to every one of being able to write a beautiful, and at the same time a rapid and easy hand, need not be argued. The want is universally felt; by none, perhaps, so stringently, as by that large class of young men who desire to become clerks in mercantile houses, lawyers' offices, and elsewhere. Many thousands of dollars are annually paid away, to writing-masters, for instruction, which, after all, for causes which will be mentioned hereafter, seldom proves at all satisfactory. Every school in the country is, like-

wise, constantly employed in attempting to teach this indispensable art. Still, it is a remarkable fact, of which every teacher will be aware, the moment he reflects, and of which every merchant or employer of clerks is aware already, that *the art of writing* RAPIDLY and WELL—of writing *as he requires his clerks to write*, is absolutely *never acquired*, under any of the old methods of instruction, in the school-house, or by the teaching of a writing-master.

Nothing is better known, than that every clerk has *to learn to write over again*, when he goes into the counting-house or the office, no matter how much time he may have given to the study and practice in the school or under the writing-teacher. This has been, until the invention of Mr. MacLaurin's System, absolutely true of all systems, and of the results of teaching in all our schools, notwithstanding our boasts of the perfection of our school instruction. It is a fact which annoys both the employer and the employed, and deprives thousands of meritorious youth, otherwise every way qualified, of the opportunity of entering into profitable and useful employment. The fact is well known, and deplorably felt, on all hands, except, perhaps, among the teachers themselves, who, seeing their pupils acquiring a handsome style of writing under their instructions, and seldom coming in contact with them

after they begin to make a practical use of it, remain longer, perhaps, than any body else, ignorant of the real failure.

The cause of this remarkable and uniform failure, in a great and important branch of our whole educational system, has never been understood, and much less the efficient remedy applied, until the discoveries and inventions of Mr. MacLaurin. When pointed out, they become simple and obvious, and teachers are everywhere surprised that they had not long since made the same discoveries. No system of instruction, in any branch of science, ever seemed destined so rapidly and completely to take the place of all others. In the public schools of our large cities, its triumphs have been complete, and it is rapidly working its way into the country as well. In addition to this, the design of the Publisher is to introduce it into every family where there is an individual no longer at school, and who has failed to acquire this valuable accomplishment. For that purpose this little book of instructions is compiled, in addition to the Exercise and Writing Books.

The cause of this universal failure to make good writers, under the old systems of instruction, is the entire disconnection and divorce which has prevailed between the two elements of QUANTITY and QUALITY; that is to say, if the learner acquired the ability to write *well*, it was at an entire

sacrifice, or rather neglect of the ability to write *fast*, and *vice versa*. In the school-house, or under the writing-master, all that was required of him was to write *well*. No attention whatever was given to the degree of rapidity with which he moved his hand, *while writing well*; and *no instruction or exercises were given for training the muscles of the hand to A RAPID MOVEMENT, WHILE EXECUTING PERFECT FORMS.*

In the common school or high school, if the scholar writes *elegantly*, no note is taken of the time he occupies in forming his letters. In all the numerous specimens of "fine writing," and "wonderful improvement," hung in the show-windows of writing-masters, in every city and town, the old and ugly handwriting is compared with the new and elegant one. Not a word is *said*, because positively nothing is *thought*, of the number of SECONDS OR MINUTES in which the new and elegant specimen of writing was executed. For the purpose of the writing-master, who does not exhibit *the pupil and his action while writing*, but only the *result*, in which the element of time does not appear, this element of time is of no importance whatever, and is not so much as thought of; but, in the Counting-House, and the Office, under the pressure of business, and when the time of the new practitioner has, every minute of it, a cash value, this element becomes either—

I. Of far more urgency and consequence than the *quality* or *beauty* of the writing. In this case, the rapidity having to be acquired, when there is no instruction, no time for thought, and no opportunity to study, or rather to accustom the hand to trace perfect forms while moving rapidly, the element of QUALITY, that is, of *beauty*, and even of *legibility*, is totally sacrificed in acquiring the other indispensable element of QUANTITY or *rapidity*. This is what happens especially with Authors, Editors, and Lawyers, who are, in consequence, proverbially the worst of penmen, while they have the greatest amount of writing to do. They run into a desperate scrawl, which remains, through life, the source of mortification to themselves, and of torment to all who have to read their manuscript; or,

II. The element of *quantity* being of *equal* importance with that of *quality*—both being indispensable—as in Book-Keeping, and the Mercantile Profession generally, a good style of writing, in all ways, has to be acquired; otherwise the party is, as it were, driven from his profession for the want of this essential qualification. Merchants are proverbial for having the best hand-writing of any class, but the hand-writing which they employ in business is *never* acquired in the school-house, nor under the writing teacher. It is solely and exclusively the product of the Counting-House,

where there is not, professedly, any attempt to *teach* writing. The young clerk is required to *know how* to write rapidly and well, with or without instruction. He is put to the work; if he succeeds, well; if not, he is discharged, loses his place, and is driven to change his pursuits in life.

Under this hard, unreasoning, and unreasonable discipline of the Counting-House, a certain proportion of those who make the attempt *do* succeed, nevertheless, and do acquire that elegant hand-writing which characterizes the merchant, combining, in the highest degree, rapidity, beauty, and ease of execution.

With ladies, who employ writing more generally for correspondence, the petty excellence taught in the school-house, while their attention is wholly given to it, and the element of time omitted, is immediately broken up and lost, the moment they abandon themselves to the *thought* which they wish to fix on paper, and are pressed into rapidity of the hand-movement by the flow of their ideas. Hence, for the most part, they fall into and retain a broken, feeble, and inelegant hand-writing, a sort of manual hobble, resulting from the remains of the school-house training in slow-moving elegance, with the rebellious efforts of the mind to force the hand into a rapid compliance with its behests. A few, aided by a native appreciation of beauty in form, a good capa-

city for imitation, and their greater natural flexibility of muscles, attain to rapidity, beauty, and strength of movement.

Under these circumstances, the philosophical questions, in relation to writing, are—

1. *What are the principles involved in the practice of the Counting-House, which do secure the entire success of a portion of writers in acquiring the perfection of the art, even though those principles are not understood there, and no systematic attempt is made to apply them?*

2. *By what means can those principles be UNIVERSALLY and SYSTEMATICALLY applied, in the Art of Instruction, so that the youth of all classes shall be successfully taught in the school-room, and so that the individual, no longer at school, shall be able to teach himself, and acquire with CERTAINTY the rapid, elegant, and easy hand-writing now acquired, as it were by chance, and by the small number?*

Mr. MacLaurin has successfully solved these questions. We do not hesitate to affirm that he has attained to the perfection of the Art of Instruction in this Department, since his system meets every condition, and secures every element that is required. He has brought the mind of a philosopher to bear upon an art—that of instructing in writing—which, although absolutely indispensable, and of immense utility, has sunk into disrepute, and almost into odium, from the

absence of principle and the failure of success. He has redeemed the profession from the just imputation of charlatanism, and placed the Art upon its legitimate basis of Science.

The replies to the questions above propounded are so simple, that the reader will immediately recognize them as necessarily true; so that his approval of the System will no longer rest upon the recommendation of any one, but upon the natural conclusions of his own judgment.

In the first place, the excellence *occasionally*, but *not certainly*, attained by the Clerk in the Counting-House, results from the fact that rapidity of movement *is absolutely insisted on and practiced*, at the same time that he has before him, for IMITATION, the perfect forms contained in the books he is to write in, and which he is expected to equal or excel in execution.

In the second place, the clerk, so pressed by the necessities of his position, succeeds, provided he is endowed with a certain natural faculty of *imitation*, in so high a degree as to enable him to reproduce forms similar to those he sees before him (while in the act of rapidly moving the hand); *if not so endowed with a special faculty of imitation, HE FAILS.*

In the third place, so reasoned Mr. MacLaurin, the True System of Instruction, in this merely every day and utilitarian art, must combine two

properties, neither of which was found in any existing system of teaching.

Firstly. It must involve *a rapidity of movement equal to the highest speed ever required in practical writing*—which is the highest speed attainable consistent with producing perfect forms—and,

Secondly. It must accustom the hand of the learner to tracing perfect forms of letters, WHILE IN THE ACT OF THIS RAPID MOVEMENT, by some means which *shall not depend upon any special endowment of the faculty of imitation*, but which shall be MERELY MECHANICAL, like walking, the turning of a crank, or any other simple operation, *which can be equally accomplished by all persons, and with nearly equal facility and success.*

The result of this reasoning was the invention of a system of exercises for the hand—constituting a course of “Manual Gymnastics,” or a sort of “Scientific and Systematic Scribbling.” These Exercises are exactly adapted to accustom the hand to move with the required rapidity while tracing, in the first place, mere loops, ovals, or simple figures, and, afterwards, the elements of letters.

To ensure the rapidity and uniformity of the movement, the hand must not be removed from the paper, and no stop must occur in the continuity of the motion. To secure this indispensable condition, Mr. MacLaurin invented the plan of

connecting the end with the beginning of the letter (or element of a letter) upon which the learner is practicing, by a mere flourish or sweep of the pen ; so that, at the very instant when one formation of the letter or element is complete another is begun. By this means, the motion is continued uniformly and steadily, the hand passing over the same ground each time.

In the first place, mere loops or ovals, and afterwards the elements of letters, and letters of a large size, are printed in the Exercise books, in red ink, which the pupil traces with the pen, at first slowly, until he begins to be familiar with the form, and then more and more rapidly. In this manner, the motion being continuous, rapidity is gradually attained, *while in the act of tracing perfect forms, and thus the two elements of QUANTITY and QUALITY begin, from the first, to be combined.*

Very soon, the hand of the learner is moving with speed, and he is, at the same time, making the shapes of perfect letters, *for which he does not depend upon the faculty of imitating what he sees at a distance from the hand.* He has merely to trace, with the pen, a line actually under the point of the pen, on the paper. He does this rapidly and continuously, until, by almost unlimited repetition, he accustoms the hand to the cor-

rect form and to the *rapidity of the movement*, AT ONE AND THE SAME INSTANT.

The larger includes the smaller. The same exercise is repeated afterwards, *with the same rapidity of movement*, upon smaller and still smaller elements, letters, and combinations of letters, until the learner is conducted by a process, the result of which is INEVITABLE, to the ability to write the finest hand with a rapid and continuous movement, exceeding any thing ordinarily attained in the Counting-house, by the best copyists.

The practical facts sustaining this theory are truly surprising. The effect of a thorough training through the six exercise books—which requires from six to eight weeks' practice, of three hours per day, faithfully applied, or an equivalent number of hours distributed through a greater or less period of time, is to give the ability to write fine-hand well, at a rate of from sixteen to twenty folios an hour. A folio is 100 words, so that this means from 1600 to 2000 words an hour. Fourteen folios is perhaps the average rate of writing, of good copyists in business offices, now. The range is from twelve to sixteen. There is a per centage, therefore, of one-fifth, or thereabouts, in favor of the systematic training of the muscles of the hand, over the chance training obtained by business men, part of which is, perhaps, the result of the greater pliancy or flexi-

bility of the muscles of the child over those of the man, at the time of learning. Nothing is more familiar than the fact that children naturally excel grown people in those occupations which require nimbleness of the fingers or hands. Yet, who, under any system of writing heretofore in use, has even so much as expected to see a child writing rapidly and well?

After the proper training quite through the exercise books of MacLaurin's system, in faithful compliance with the instructions, it is the usual and always anticipated occurrence, to see the pupil writing down a page of the ordinary copy book in from THREE MINUTES AND A HALF TO SIX MINUTES, seldom requiring more than FOUR MINUTES. This speed is considerably above that of the counting-house. For the same labor, FIFTEEN OR TWENTY MINUTES are habitually taken in the school room, under the old methods, in point of fact, while no note is taken of the TIME as an element of good writing.

The writing thus accomplished by the sole use of the exercise books, with a very slight attention to copies, is fair and legible. To impart a given *style* of writing, it is necessary to continue writing after copies in that style, for a short time after the exercises are completed. The exercises *give the ability, by preparing the way*, for writing in any style. It is a simple matter, then, to adopt

and familiarize the hand to the style preferred. Ornamental writing, and even large hand, are far better learned last, instead of beginning with them. "There is no more necessary connection between ornamental writing and plain writing than there is between historical and sign painting."

The adult who already writes, but writes badly, needs a little different instruction, and has a different experience from the child who begins upon the right system. The great peculiarity in the use of the MacLaurin Exercises, upon him, is, that he will begin to feel the effect upon his ordinary handwriting almost from the beginning. After the first hour or two of practice upon the exercises, he will begin to find himself writing his common hand much more freely, rapidly, and better. This will encourage him to proceed. Instead of laying aside his old hand, it will be better for him to follow every hour of practice on the "Manual Gymnastic Exercises," by an hour of his own ordinary writing. On the other hand, he must guard well against any feeling of discouragement, if, at a certain point in his progress, there is a kind of breaking up of his old hand, without his yet having the ability to write well the new. *This must needs happen, and will come of the tendency to move THE WHOLE HAND AND ARM with an unwonted rapidity*

sometime before a correspondingly increased flexibility of the MUSCLES OF THE FINGERS *is attained.* This last comes only with the later exercises upon the smaller sized characters. The first exercises, the effect of which is first experienced, are solely for the purpose of giving ease and accuracy in the movement of the whole hand and arm.

The learner may enter upon the system of practice *with the most entire faith in the result.* The system is unequivocally competent to enable him to accomplish all that he desires in the art. If there is any failure or tendency to failure, therefore, in the result, it is an absolute certainty that the fault is *in him*; either because he has not rightly understood the instructions, which are very few and simple; or else that he has, through indolence or otherwise, neglected the prescribed amount of practice. Without the full amount of practice, let him remember, that no complete result is promised. By the device of a continuous movement of the pen over the same character, *as much exercise of the hand is obtained, in using up the six Exercise Books, as would be obtained in writing through THREE HUNDRED ordinary writing-books, besides the advantage of the movements being* CONTINUOUS AND CONSTANTLY UPON THE PERFECT FORM WHICH LIES BENEATH THE POINT OF THE PEN. Nothing less than this immense amount of practice—made trifling, how-

ever, by the rapidity of movement—will suffice. Like dancing on a tight-rope, playing on an instrument, sleight of hand, and the manipulations of many trades, writing is a dexterity of the muscles, which can be got in no other way than by *extensively doing the thing*, with the requisite rapidity, or until the requisite rapidity and certainty of movement are acquired.

THE PRESCRIBED AMOUNT OF TIME MUST ABSOLUTELY BE GIVEN. The scholar should be reconciled to this by a comparison with the immensely greater period now required in the school-house, where the art of writing is laboriously pursued with the imperfect results above specified. The time saved by pupils at school will enable them to acquire much other useful knowledge.

DIRECTIONS AND INSTRUCTIONS

TO THE

SELF-EDUCATOR IN WRITING.

1. MANNER OF SITTING.

Sit easily, fronting the desk or table. Turn the left side towards and the right a little away from it. Rest partly on the seat and partly upon the left arm on the desk or table, so as to leave the right arm perfectly free. The right arm will then rest on the edge of the table, at about half-way between the wrist and elbow.

Remark.—It is better for the health, and, in all ways, to sit nearly erect, to throw the shoulders back and the chest forward, in writing; but the learner may have enough else to observe in beginning. Some sit with the right side to the table, but in this position there is danger of throwing the weight of the body on the right arm, and thus preventing a free and graceful movement.

2. MANNER OF PLACING THE PAPER.

The paper or book should be square with the table; that is, the bottom of the book parallel with the front edge of the table.

3. MANNER OF HOLDING THE PEN.

There are various methods of holding the pen, slightly different from each other, and some teachers give very particular directions, which are not at all important. With different shaped hands and fingers there will be, necessarily, some differences in this matter, and each writer soon finds which method is most easy and convenient for him. There are only two points of any great consequence: 1. To place the pen square upon the paper; that is, so that if the elevated handle of the pen were let down flat on the paper, it would then lie parallel with the side of the sheet. This brings the two points of the pen equally upon the surface of the paper. 2. To hold the pen, WITHOUT ANY GRASP, loosely between the thumb and fingers; that is, barely *steadying*, but not *pinching*, the pen-holder or handle, as the pen is pushed easily along the surface of the paper.

Remark No. 1.—This last direction is VERY IMPORTANT, and especially so in practising the Exercises. No matter how light the line made by the ink is, the lighter the better; because, *if much ink is shed, the page becomes wet, and the model ruined all the sooner.* On the other hand, this additional necessity for holding the pen lightly, and making the slightest trace that can be seen, in practising the Exercises, is one of the most valuable uses of

the Exercises themselves, because it teaches and enforces the very habit which is essential to good writing ever afterwards.

Remark No. 2.—Children, as beginners, need some little showing about the method of placing the pen between the fingers and thumb, and the other fingers upon the paper, which any person who can teach a child to hold a knife and fork is competent to give. The main point is, that the child should not be embarrassed by insisting on minutiae. If he is nearly right, practice will do the rest.

4. THE KIND OF PEN TO BE USED.

The Publisher, C. B. Norton, Book-Publisher and Bookseller, New York, has had a pen expressly manufactured, by the celebrated Gillott, which he imports and supplies for use with MacLaurin's System. It is called the MacLaurin pen, and can be had of any bookseller who sells the Exercise books. Gillott's extra-fine pen, marked 303, will answer. *The use of one or the other of these pens is VERY DESIRABLE.* The effort to learn to write by this system may prove less successful for the want of the right choice of a pen.

If quill pens are used for the Exercises, they should be hard, made quite fine, and with a short split in the nib, so that a fine mark can be made for a long time without renewing the cut of the pen.

A coarsely-finished, or common steel pen, is

wholly unfit for practice upon the Exercises. It will destroy the paper in going a dozen times over it. It would be even better to trace the characters with a pencil, although the right instrument is the MacLaurin pen, made expressly for the purpose. After one has learned to write, he can write with any sort of a pen, although he will always probably prefer the fine pen here mentioned. [*See the Advertisement at the end of this Book.*]

5. USE OF THE FIRST EXERCISE BOOK.

The design of all the Exercises in this book, excepting the four pages of straight lines near the close, is to give the command *of the whole hand and arm, and the ability to move the pen with celerity and precision over the whole page.*

Place the book and hold the pen, filled with thin black or blue ink, as above directed. Commence on the upper part of the red form or model, near the right edge, and, touching as lightly as possible, pass over the form from right to left with a steady, uniform, and continuous movement, at the rate of from twenty to thirty times around in a minute, and continue this movement until the paper begins to be wet or rough, then pass to the next form.

You cannot at first go more than twenty-five or thirty times over a form without wearing out the paper, nor perhaps more than that number of times in a minute. *If you are too careful to keep*

precisely on the red line you will not gain the requisite facility, and if you perform it too boldly and rapidly you will not acquire the precision. The design is, and the constant endeavor must be, to unite, in the highest possible degree, correctness and rapidity, without at all sacrificing the one to the other.

The entire course of practice over the red models must be in fine hair-line, with the least possible pressure. Instead of being careful to make, each time, a visible line, endeavor to pass over the paper so lightly as to leave no line. You should, at the end of half a dozen pages, be able to pass fifty times over a form in one minute, without injuring the surface of the paper. Hold the pen, throughout the course, precisely as you would in writing fine hand, and move or slide the hand lightly over the paper, resting on the end of the little finger, or on two fingers, just enough to steady the hand, but not so much as to prevent a perfectly free movement.

In the whole of this book, excepting the four pages of straight lines, there is no movement of the fingers, independent of the whole hand and arm, the work being done precisely as you would do it with chalk on the black-board. In those four pages of straight lines you use the thumb and two fingers when running over the straight line, *thus combining the two movements, viz. that of the*

whole hand and arm in carrying the pen from the termination of the straight line to its commencement, and that of the thumb and fingers in passing over the straight line.

6. USE OF THE SECOND EXERCISE BOOK.

In this book, of thirty-two pages, the copies on the right hand, comprised of elementary principles of writing, require the *combined movement of hand and arm, and of the thumb and fingers*. In running over the *letters* use the thumb and fingers, the hand and arm constituting only a vehicle to carry the pen to points where the thumb and fingers are to be employed in forming the letters.

The pages on the left hand are intended solely to give facility and precision in moving the hand and arm, as in the first book, and to be executed with the same movement you would employ in striking a large capital, but as lightly as possible.

Every Element and Letter is to be begun precisely where it would be if there were no line or flourish connecting the end with the beginning.

7. USE OF THE THIRD EXERCISE BOOK.

The sixteen right hand pages of this book, composed of Exercises on elements of writing and letters, require *the light movement of the thumb and fingers* in forming the characters, and *the whole hand and arm movement* forming the line which connects the termination of each word with its be-

ginning, PASSING OVER EACH MODEL NOT LESS THAN FIFTY TIMES, with a uniform, current, and continuous movement.

The copies on the left hand pages, as far as the middle of the book, are work for the hand and arm only, as in the Exercises of the First Book. The small Exercises on the remaining left hand pages may be gone over, say twenty-five times, very lightly, and as rapidly as is compatible with precision.

8. USE OF THE FOURTH EXERCISE BOOK.

The sixteen right hand pages of this book contain two pages of each of the eight principles or constituent elements of the alphabet. They should be done lightly, freely, and currently, but with special reference to correctness, or precision, as they form the character of your hand. These, as well as all other large models, must be gone over not less than fifty times, and that, if possible, within the minute.

The smaller models of letters and words on the sixteen left-hand pages must be done in the same manner, but twenty-five times over each will answer.

9. USE OF THE FIFTH EXERCISE BOOK.

This book contains a page of each letter of the alphabet, with the various forms used in writing them. There is no letter in which it is

necessary to take the pen from the paper in executing it. Pass over each letter lightly, currently, and very carefully, not less than fifty times.

10. USE OF THE SIXTH EXERCISE BOOK.

This book is a most important one, containing a complete set of capitals, abbreviations and numbers. That you may not be at a loss where to commence, observe this direction, as previously given, thus: Each letter has its termination joined with its beginning by a connecting line. *Begin the letter as you would if that connecting line were omitted.* The words on the left-hand pages are to be executed as in the preceding books, lightly, uniformly, rapidly and correctly.

11. SPECIAL OBSERVATIONS.

The six Exercise, or Red Books, are all that are absolutely indispensable to the acquisition of a good hand, by those who already know something of writing. These are followed, however, by a series of six copy-books, calculated to teach an elegant style of writing, in fine and coarse hand, and two blank books for general practice. It is far better for the learner, if not limited pecuniarily, to be supplied with both sets, and after a lesson of three-quarters of an hour or an hour upon the red books, to devote some time to writing after a copy, or, without copy, in copying from some printed book. When the exercises

occupy only half an hour, use the Exercise and Fine Hand Books on alternate days.

The overrunnings should be counted and measured by the clock or watch, if practicable, in order that the learner may know, himself, how well he is doing, and be sure that he does not deceive himself as to the amount of work actually done. Remember that the results are not promised without the work. A person who has gone carelessly or imperfectly through a book is not prepared for the next book. He should repeat upon the same book.

NOTICE.—All other kinds of books connected in any way with the art of writing, in plain or ornamental branches, are in course of preparation by Mr. MacLaurin, and will be published by Mr. Norton. The design is to supply the trade, schools, and individuals with every thing of the kind that is ever wanted, to an extent not done by any other house. For descriptions and particulars, see advertisements at the end.

LETTERS AND TESTIMONIALS.

MAD. CHEGARAY, who has kindly furnished the following, has been known to the public for many years, as being at the head of the largest and most celebrated school for young ladies in the country :

NEW YORK, *April 7*, 1853.

Having some months since introduced in my school the novel and very original system of teaching penmanship invented by Mr. W. S. MacLaurin, its results have been such as to leave no question in my mind as to its intrinsic merit. The short space of time required for the attainment of the superior advantages offered by it appears almost incredible. From the results produced in my own school, I am quite satisfied that pupils commencing to write at the usual period—the age of six or seven—may acquire a perfectly formed and extremely rapid hand before leaving my preparatory department, and that the union of correct form and great celerity is a necessary consequence

of the course of practice. This immense saving of time must render this system invaluable to those interested in school education, where so much is to be done in so short a time. Its entire originality, and the scientific principles upon which it is based, must, I think, ensure its general adoption in the schools. H. D. CHEGARAY.

The following is from James N. M'Elligott, LL. D., whose ability and zeal in the cause of education are attested by the many lectures on the subject he has delivered in various parts of the country, as well as by his numerous published works :

NEW YORK, *April 5, 1853.*

That the system of penmanship invented by W. S. MacLaurin, Esq., of this city, is one of extraordinary merit—far superior, in fact, to anything of the kind with which I am acquainted—is a conclusion which I have reached after a somewhat lengthy and thorough trial. Though in the principle underlying every exercise one may, I think, find, upon inspection, the all-sufficient pledge of the success of the plan, its efficacy will most certainly and satisfactorily appear in the experience of the school-room. Here, if the plan be duly adhered to, the pupil is compelled to unite, in his practice, correctness of form with rapidity of execution. These, as is well known, are the capital requisites in the formation of a good penman ; and it is the crowning feature of Mr. MacLaurin's system that they come out of the practice involved in his course of exercises by a sort of natural necessity.

JAMES N. M'ELIGOTT.

The following testimonial is from Mr. Bertram Harrison, Principal of the Bancroft Institute, one of the most admirable institutions in New York :

THE BANCROFT INSTITUTE, 809 BROADWAY, }
NEW YORK, *March 25, 1853.* }

To W. S. MACLAURIN, Esq.

Dear Sir :—Your system of writing having been in use for some time in my school, it gives me much pleasure to state my opinion of its merits and advantages. The points in which it surpasses all other methods of instruction, and which must eventually cause it to supersede them, are, in my view, briefly as follow :

1st. Its substitution of a simple mechanical process for the usual

method of imitation ; so that the pupil, instead of making a great many badly shaped letters in endeavouring to imitate his copy, begins from the first to make good ones and with rapidity. Good writing is thus rendered possible to those possessing, in a very inferior degree, the faculty of imitation.

2d. Its immense saving of time. It is my firm conviction that, supposing children to begin the course at six or seven years of age, and to practice the usual time, three weekly lessons of an hour each, they would write perfectly and with extreme rapidity by the time they are ten or eleven. When pupils of twelve and upwards go through the course faithfully, I believe that in one year they would be fitted for any counting-house, so far as writing is concerned.

3d. Its teaching to write a good hand *rapidly*. On the old systems a pupil writes his copies well, perhaps, because he writes slowly ; but as soon as he seeks to write fast, as, in his exercises, his true hand is found to be a mere scribble : so false is the maxim, "Let him learn to write *well* first, and he will be sure to write *fast* eventually." Your system achieves the two great desiderata, rapidity and precision.

4th. Its progressive character. The whole being based on scientific analysis, each previous step trains the eye, the hand, and the muscles for the succeeding, and thus tends directly to the desired end.

5th. Its capability of changing the most inveterately bad handwriting. On this point I need not enlarge, as it has been so amply proved by experiment.

For these reasons, then—its reduction of penmanship to a simple mechanical process ; its immense saving of time, a most important consideration, where the period allotted to education is so limited ; the combined precision and rapidity it ensures ; its admirable arrangement, advancing the pupil by nicely graduated steps ; and its power of enabling the worst penman to write well—I think it far superior to all other methods, and destined to acquire a wide and deserved popularity.

Trusting that you will meet with the success I anticipate, and which your talents and unwearied labors for so many years in this department justly merit, believe me to remain,

Yours very sincerely,

BERTRAM HARRISON,

Principal of the Bancroft Institute.

Mr. Charles Coudert has kindly given the following testimonial. The Lyceum, which he has conducted for the last thirty years in this city has obtained a celebrity beyond the borders of our own country. He numbers among the graduates of his institution many of the most eminent individuals in Mexico and South America.

NEW YORK, *April 15, 1858.*

W. S. MACLAURIN, Esq.

My Dear Sir: I have carefully looked through your new and practical work on penmanship, and it gives me very great pleasure to testify to its excellence. Though it has been but quite recently laid before the public. I have been able to judge of its merits, having seen it applied by you in your lessons to my pupils: and I would want no other proof than their very rapid progress, to be fully satisfied that your system is the best, most practical, and most expeditious that I have ever seen.

Independently of this, a mere examination of the work is sufficient to convince the most superficial observer that it *must* be what it purports.

Confident that your work will meet with that success which it so fully deserves, I remain, very truly, your obedient servant,

CHAS. COUDERT.

From John W. Bulkley, A. M., Principal of the Normal School in Williamsburgh, whose able and energetic devotion to the improvement of our Public Schools, has identified his name with the subject of education:

WILLIAMSBURG, *November 8, 1858.*

W. S. MACLAURIN, Esq.

Dear Sir:—Having been for years acquainted with you as a teacher of penmanship, and having known of your great success in this department of instruction, I was prepared on the announcement of the publication of your "new system of writing" to expect something in advance of your predecessors. On examination of the same, this impression was confirmed.

I believe your system to be based upon philosophical principles, and scientifically developed. The exercises are progressive in their development, and well calculated to educate the arm, hand, fingers, and eye, for their respective offices in producing the accomplished penman.

The experiment commenced some weeks since in our Normal School, under your direction, has been very successful, and to the class entirely satisfactory. The class are unwilling to suspend these exercises for any other, until they shall have perfected themselves in the same.

In view of these considerations, we confidently recommend your system as superior to all others with which we are acquainted.

Most truly yours,

J. W. BULKLEY,

Principal of Williamsburgh Normal School.

From Joseph M. Ely, A. M., Principal of a classical and commercial school in University Place, N. Y. :

W. S. MACLAURIN, Esq.

Dear Sir:—Having been familiar with your method of teaching penmanship during most of the time since I met you in the N. Y. High School in 1829, and having for several years employed your services. I take pleasure in saying to you, in this formal way, that your system of penmanship, as now published, is, in my estimation, the only system of any value. I could say many things in its favor, but will refer only to the three great points at which you seem to aim, and which a thorough use of your system accomplishes, viz. : facility of moving the whole hand and arm,—of the fingers only,—and of both combined,—and, at the same time, great rapidity of execution.

Your method of repeating the practice over the same principle or form, is the only true method, and must succeed; and this also brings your system within the ability of any energetic teacher, to use in his school without assistance. Convinced of its superiority over all other systems, I shall use no other in my school, however long I may teach.

Wishing you the success you deserve, for your untiring efforts to improve this most useful of all arts, I remain,

Yours, most sincerely,

J. M. ELY,

October 4th, 1858.

44 University Place, New York.

Extract from a letter of Professor Longley, of Emory & Henry College, Virginia.

“My personal recommendations to what I regard as a great advance upon the old imitative system, are everywhere given, regarding you as thereby a public benefactor.”

From the Southern Repertory and College Review:

"MacLaurin's system proposes to produce a combination, in the highest possible degree, of correctness of form and rapidity of execution; and we do not see how it can fail to accomplish it. Furnishing an extensive course of patterns for accurate and rapid exercises, it leaves nothing to the faculty of imitation, and thus affords those who have not 'an eye to form'—who are not 'natural penmen'—an important advantage not found in copy books. We wish to see MacLaurin's models extensively introduced and thoroughly tried. We recommend them for schools, and for those out of school who write with the wrong end of the quill;—there is both Science and Art in them."

From the Knickerbocker.

While all other branches of education have kept pace with the progress of the age, the art of writing alone seems to have lagged behind: it is precisely where it was forty years ago, when CARSTAIRS promulgated his method in England. From that time to the present, system after system, method after method, have shot, like meteors, before the public gaze, and, after an evanescent popularity, sunk below the horizon, into perpetual darkness and oblivion. Indeed, our educational institutions, public and private, have been, and still are, flooded with writing-books of every imaginable character and pretension. They are however, one and all, but the crude, ill-digested productions of unreflecting, inefficient persons; mere abortive attempts, necessarily so from the total absence of any leading principle, and merely ringing the changes on shades of difference scarcely perceptible; so much so, that the term 'writing-master' has become a synonym for intellectual weakness and imbecility, for brains of the size and organization of an ostrich's; in short, for a word which is its own most comprehensive definition—a *writing-master*! In view of these circumstances, it may well be imagined in what frame of mind we approach the examination of another system of writing. That examination, however, reluctantly undertaken, has succeeded in convincing us that the present is the best, and, indeed, the only system of writing that deserves that appellation. It is philosophical in its principles, and logical and rational in its deductions: it *must* accomplish, in every instance, the object it proposes to effect. The work embraces twelve books, which are regularly progressive in their

character. In all the systems hitherto in use, the faculty of imitation is entirely relied upon, to enable the pupil to produce, as nearly as possible, a fac-simile of the copy before him. Now, it would be equally rational to set before the pupil a picture of RAPHAEL, furnish him paints and brushes, and bid him copy it. There are those who have a natural talent or faculty of imitation : such will become good writers under any system, or no system at all. But the great mass of scholars require some contrivance by which to make amends for the absence of the imitative faculty. The work in question professes to give, and we believe does give, the necessary assistance. All previous systems propose to enable the pupil to write *well*, first, and, at some indefinitely-subsequent period, to superadd the ability to write *fast*. The experience of the world, up to the present moment, proves this method to be an entire failure. A lad who has learned at school to write *well, slowly*, will find himself utterly unable to increase the speed of his writing, and at the same time to retain its elegance. The moment he attempts to write faster than he is accustomed to, he writes an entirely different hand, having no connection with, or similarity to, his original slow hand. MACLAURIN's system combines the two elements, *rapidity of execution*, and *correctness of form*, from the very first lesson. The work consists of a series of models, enlarged to several times the ordinary size, which are to be over-run fifty or sixty times each. This practice is intended to produce the greatest possible freedom in the motion of the whole arm and hand. In a more advanced stage, the motion of the fingers is added, thereby combining the two distinct movements, viz. : that of the whole arm and hand, and that of the fingers alone. Indeed, this division of the work may be denominated a system of gymnastic exercises, intended to train the hand and arm, so that the hand may be carried, with unerring accuracy, to any part of the page, while the fingers are trained to do, with equal rapidity, the small part of producing the letters. All this is effected with the utmost rapidity, from the very first lesson, combining, at the same time, the most perfect correctness of form. The author assures us, that pupils, varying in age from eight to fifty years, by going over this course of practice, are enabled to write, easily and handsomely, at the rate of twenty folios per hour ; a degree of rapidity which has never been attained by any other process, the ordinary rate for an accomplished penman being ten to twelve folios per hour.

Independently of its intrinsic merits, this system has received the sanction of some of the most distinguished teachers and educationalists

in the country. Madame CHEGARAY, whose celebrated school for young ladies has, for so many years, been one of the ornaments of our city; JAS. N. MACELLIGOTT, LL. D., one of our most successful and scientific teachers; Mr. BERTRAM HARRISON, Principal of the BANCROFT Institute; Mr. CHAS. COUDERT, Principal, for the last thirty years, of the Lyceum bearing his name, together with others, equally favorably known to the community, have given the most flattering testimonials of the system, after witnessing its success in their respective establishments. This system is now in successful operation in more than fifty of the public and private schools of New-York and vicinity. In France, it has been submitted to the Minister of Public Instruction, and we have seen a report thereon, published in the official paper, the '*Journal Général de l'Instruction Publique*,' of October 22, 1853, in which the system is highly praised, and recommended for adoption.

We consider this the first step in the right direction, in reference to the *teaching* of writing, and cordially recommend the work to teachers and all those interested in the subject of education, as well as to all commercial men. In all that has been above said, we do not wish to detract from the merit or ability of any persons now engaged in the business of writing. Many of them we know to be elegant penmen; but it has not been sufficiently considered, that the ability to *write*, and the ability to *teach* writing, are entirely distinct qualifications.—A man may be a splendid writer, and yet unable to teach others to write. MacLAURIN's system *teaches* writing, by a process equally applicable to those possessing a remarkable faculty of imitation, and to those devoid of any such faculty.

From the Principal of the Hebrew National School, in Henry street,
New York.

SHARRY ZEDEK HEBREW NATIONAL SCHOOL, }
NEW YORK, January 13, 1854.

The system of penmanship of Mr. MacLaurin has been adopted by this institution with the highest satisfaction, and is most freely recommended to the attention of teachers and school officers generally.

I consider it in all respects superior to any other system or set of exercises I have ever seen.

A. C. VAN EPPS, *Principal*.

From Samuel S. Randall, Esq., Acting State Superintendent of Common Schools.

ALBANY, January 27, 1854.

MR. W. S. MACLAURIN.

Dear Sir:—I have carefully examined your system of writing, and have adopted it in my own family with the most entire success. I have no hesitation in saying that I regard the *principle* upon which it rests—the culture and development of the muscles of the hand and arm—as eminently a sound and philosophical one, and indeed as the *only* mode in which a free, easy, and graceful style of penmanship can be attained. I cheerfully commend your system to the favorable regard of parents, teachers, and Boards of Education.

Very respectfully, your obed't serv't,

SAML. S. RANDALL.

Opinion of Miss Anna M. Marsh, Principal of the Female Department of N. Y. Ward School No. 12.

I have used both the exercise and writing books published by Mr. W. S. MacLaurin for some time, in the school under my charge, with the most satisfactory results. The improvement made by the pupils during that time has been more marked and rapid, with an equal amount of practice, than at any former period; and although I was at first somewhat prejudiced against any innovations in teaching, I am now convinced that by going through the course of practice contained in the Exercise books, even the most backward may become good writers in a much shorter time than is generally devoted to teaching writing, and without the uncertainty attendant upon former methods.

ANNA M. MARSH,

Principal of Female Department, W. S. No. 12.

From W. W. Smith, Esq., Principal of Ward School No. 1.

WARD SCHOOL No. 1, March 29, 1854.

W. S. MACLAURIN, Esq.

Dear Sir:—After having thoroughly tested your system of writing, I am fully convinced that it is the best, if not the only method by which penmanship can be taught or acquired successfully; that is, taught so as to give the learner full command of all the

muscles that must be brought into action in forming the various chirographic characters used in writing the English language.

It causes the pupil to assume, and to keep, an easy, graceful, and healthy posture at the desk. By it they acquire the union of quantity and quality, two very necessary qualifications for a good penman or book-keeper.

In going through the six books of your system, the pupil performs as much work as would fill some hundreds of books, if done in the usual style. By this method of training, the pupil, whether he has a natural talent or not for writing, is forced to do a vast amount of free practice over correct models, thereby getting a rapid mechanical action, without which none can become quick and graceful penmen. Every other system with which I am acquainted gives a stiffness to the writing, which can only be overcome by long and faithful practice in after life, and which, from circumstances or inclination, many never remedy. In recommending your system to the favorable consideration of all, teachers and pupils, I would particularly commend it to young ladies.

Hoping that you will reap the reward of your labor, I remain,
dear sir,

Truly yours,

WM. W. SMITH, *Principal*.

Opinion of Henry Kiddle, Esq.

I have carefully examined the system of penmanship recently published by W. S. MacLaurin, and for a short time used his books in two large classes in my school. The system proper consists of a series of practical exercises, which are based upon principles that I think cannot fail to commend themselves to every impartial and intelligent man as the only true theory of penmanship.

While other systems have been devoted exclusively to cultivate the taste of the pupil with regard to the forms, proportions, shading, &c., essential to elegant chirography, disregarding wholly the means by which the faculty of executing them is to be acquired, Mr. MacLaurin has, with the originality of a master, struck out in an entirely new path, and given the scholar a graduated series of disciplinary exercises designed to impart to the arm, hand and fingers the requisite muscular strength and adaptability, and thus to communicate to them the power of striking off, with ease and rapidity, any form, or

connected series of forms, which the taste of the penman may dictate or his circumstances require. The knowledge of the elementary forms and combinations of writing is thus made a secondary matter, and left to be acquired as a simultaneous or subsequent exercise.

My experience of the practical operation of this system is at present quite limited, but still enables me to say, with confidence, that I entertain no doubt that it will prove, wherever tried, as successful in its results as it is admirable in theory; and that, by it, persons may acquire, with very little instruction, and in a fraction of the time usually required, a perfect mastery of the pen, and all the facility and neatness in penmanship which the exigencies of business or the demands of social or professional life render desirable.

HENRY KIDDLE,

*Principal of Ward School No. 2, and Associate
Teacher of Female Normal School.*

NEW YORK, January 16, 1854.

From John H. Fanning, Esq.

W. S. MACLAURIN, Esq.

Dear Sir:—Several months' experience in the use of your "System of Writing," in the school under my charge, has fully confirmed my previous high estimate of its peculiar and sterling merits. Your system imparts grace and freedom in the control and use of the pen, thus combining (what in this business age is a desideratum) correctness of form with rapidity of execution. In my humble judgment, if not only the youth of our country, but the men and women grown, were to go through a course of your "Gymnastic Exercises," in a very short period of time the general character and style of penmanship would be improved at least a hundred per cent.

The copies of your "Fine Hand Copy Books," from their freedom of style, and close resemblance to copies written with a pen, have, as far as my observation has extended, never been excelled; and hence I consider them well adapted for the use of schools.

I cordially recommend your system to the careful examination and trial of all interested in the advancement of education.

Respectfully, &c.,

J. H. FANNING,

Principal of Ward School No. 12, N. Y.

NEW YORK, April 8, 1854.

Report of a Committee appointed by the Teachers of Philadelphia.

The Committee appointed to examine "MacLaurin's System of Writing," report, that they have examined the system, in practical operation in two of the schools under their charge, and though, from the limited time in which it has been tried, the data for forming a conclusive judgment are not so complete as a longer trial would have given, yet they are satisfied, from what they have seen, that its introduction into the Public Schools of Philadelphia would be attended with marked advantage to both pupils and Teachers.

In our Grammar Schools, the number of studies which the Principal is required to teach is so great, that it is impossible for him, without sacrificing some of them, to give that time and attention to writing which is so necessary under the present system (or rather want of system,) to make good penmen of their pupils. Practically, therefore, the hand of the pupil is formed under difficulties, and in a manner which almost certainly tends to make it a bad one. However well he may have been drilled by the teacher in the lower divisions in writing formal copies, the great amount of written exercises, and the rapid manner in which they must be frequently performed, will cause, in the majority of cases, even those who, when writing slowly, may be fairly called good penmen, to produce an almost illegible scrawl. The nerves and muscles drilled to form letters with a slow, uniform motion, have not been accustomed to rapidity of movement; and when this is attempted without any previous training, the result is just what might have been anticipated, a defective performance.

Every experienced teacher knows how much harder it is to cure a bad habit, when once acquired, than to teach a correct one, at first. It is true, of both mental and mechanical operations, and eminently so of the latter, every mechanical operation requiring the exercise of the mind to direct the muscular movement. Under proper training, the power which can be acquired of rapidly and correctly doing many things, which, without such training, are impossible, seems, to those who are ignorant of the preliminary work, almost magical. Instances of this power can be found in the skill with which one thoroughly practiced can play on the piano or organ, and in the ability of the rope-dancer or equestrian performer to go through with feats of agility which are entirely out of the power of the unpracticed. We see it also exemplified in the wonderful skill and rapidity with

which, through the division of labor, and the confining of the attention to one operation, the artizan performs his task.

Now, the system of Mr. MacLaurin supplies this defect of other systems, and gives to the pupil who faithfully practices it that training which, by COMBINING ACCURACY OF FORM WITH RAPIDITY OF EXECUTION, will make him, in the full sense of the term, a good penman. *The labor of the teacher is saved in a great degree, and the pupil acquires, from the first, a confidence in his own ability, which is, of itself, an essential element of success in any pursuit.*

By commencing this training in the very beginning they will, in the great majority of instances, become both rapid and accurate writers before they enter the first division, and thus a great saving of time and labor to both teachers and pupils will have been made, which can be devoted to a more successful prosecution of other studies.

We believe that the system can be taught successfully by the teachers now in the schools, but it would perhaps be better, in the first instance, if classes of teachers could be instructed in each school, and then they could, without difficulty, superintend and teach the pupils. We would recommend to the Association the passage of the following

RESOLUTION.

Resolved, That this Association earnestly recommend the introduction of MacLaurin's System of Writing into the Grammar Schools of the first district.

Signed, JAMES C. FISHER,
JAMES H. MACBRIDE,
GEORGE A. PIPER.

From Professor Mills, of New York.

NEW YORK, *July 8th*, 1854.

DEAR SIR,—Soon after the publication of Mr. MacLaurin's work on writing I took occasion to express to you my entire approbation of the system. Since that time I have examined the work more in detail, and the result is, a thorough conviction that it is not only the *best*, but, comparatively, the *only* systematic work, on the subject which it exhibits, that has ever fallen under my observation. The author has, in fact, reduced that, which has hitherto been regarded as a mere *art*, to an absolute *science*; and should the success which the great intrinsic merit of the work deserves attend his efforts, he will

reap a richer pecuniary reward than often falls to the lot of those whose lives are passed in toiling for the improvement of others. I have had the pleasure of intimately knowing Mr. MacLaurin's professional skill for more than thirty years, and have never, during the whole of that time, hesitated for a moment to consider him the best teacher of writing I have ever known. The publication of this work fully develops the *source* of his unparalleled success as a practical teacher.

With very great respect,

C. B. NORTON, Esq.

N. MILLS.

From Norton's Literary Gazette.

MACLAURIN'S SYSTEM OF WRITING.—We cannot do less than call the specific attention of the trade, of teachers of all grades, and of the general public, to an advertisement contained in another column of the *Currente Calamo*, or MacLaurin's System of Penmanship. The strong statements contained in that document are not conceived in the sense of a "puff." They are a very imperfect setting forth of the real merits of what is substantially a new and most important invention, which is destined to do no less than to revolutionize an extensive branch of education.

A literary journal, while it avoids the common tendency and temptation to become the vehicle for the senseless commendation of mere wares, must not, on the other hand, incur the imputation of imbecility and incompetency, by the fear of uttering a strong and honest conviction of the great superiority of any literary production which comes under its notice. Its merit must not be that it never bestows praise, but simply that it commends as judiciously as it condemns, so that its judgment may be uniformly confirmed by the subsequent verdict of the reader or purchaser. It is in this sense, and with a full understanding of the reaction upon the standing of our journal itself, resulting from any false estimate of a literary matter, that we do not hesitate to say what we have to say of this new and remarkable series of school publications.

A special pointing of the reader's attention to the characteristics of Mr. MacLaurin's inventions and discoveries in teaching the art of penmanship, is the more necessary from the fact that they are quite liable to be overlooked by the cursory examiner. Immense differences of result are sometimes produced by such slight causes that.

unless the results have been actually witnessed, it requires no little acumen to distinguish them, and to foresee the important consequences to flow from such seeming trifles. The art of printing itself is a good illustration. The immense importance of the art is nowhere questioned now; and yet few go back to the reflection how small a thing it was which constituted the whole of this mighty invention. It was nothing more nor less than the lucky thought of cutting a large block into a number of small blocks, so that the parts could be re-arranged, from time to time, into new combinations. Printing had been done for thousands of years, by the Chinese, as it is done now, by wood-cuts, and the result on the paper does not *appear* to be materially different, whether the *types* are *solid* or *separate and moveable*. Viewed, however, with reference to the *facility of the general labor of printing*, and the *rapid multiplication and dissemination of the results*, and the difference is world-wide. How few, nevertheless, who had not witnessed the modern extension of the art of printing, and who might have been introduced into the sanctum of Guttenberg, and there seen the simple contrivance of splitting the blocks to be employed in printing, would have prognosticated the result—would have had the philosophy to have seized the immense power hid away on this simple contrivance.

Without claiming a similar importance for any kind or amount of improvement in the art of teaching to write, there is, nevertheless, a striking similiarity to the case cited, in the nature and remarkable effects of a few simple contrivances introduced by Mr. MacLaurin, into this sister art. For a reason, just as easily understood, *if thought of*, as that which defeated the *facility* of block-printing, while the types were not rendered moveable, every attempt to teach uniformly a *good and rapid* hand-writing in the *schools*, and *by writing teachers*, has been a failure; or, more correctly stated, *no such attempt has ever been made*. Writing has always been *taught* without any reference to *rapidity*, just as printing by blocks is done without any reference to *facility in shifting the combinations of letters*. The hand-writing taught in the school-house and by all writing-masters hitherto, is only learned to be broken up and thrown away again, as soon as the practitioner comes to apply it in the business of life. Mr. MacLaurin has effectually reformed all this. He has divined the simple cause of this failure in the entire omission of *the element of rapidity*

from the course of instruction, while, in practical business, it is the most important element. He has remedied this defect by combining *rapidity of movement with the production of perfect forms from the first*. By another simple contrivance he has rendered the preservation of this rapidity of movement throughout an extensive course of practice compatible with a small consumption of writing surface, a matter essential to its general adoption in the schools.

By the means adopted, the pupil acquires as much practice in the use of MacLaurin's Six Exercise Books, as he could otherwise acquire by consuming *three hundred similar books*, and yet, by the *elements of rapid movement introduced from the beginning*, the time is not far distant from that ordinarily bestowed by the beginner upon six ordinary copy-books of the same size. In going through this amount of exercise, he is *all the time tracing perfect forms, printed under the point of the pen in red ink*, so that hardly anything is left to the faculty of imitation. In this manner both *excellence in the shape of the letters and great manual dexterity, ease and rapidity*, are acquired at the same time by a kind of *inevitable necessity*. Like destructive fire-arms which put the small man upon a level of equality with his superior in physical strength, the system of Mr. MacLaurin puts the learner who has small natural powers of imitation, upon a footing of almost entire equality with him who has the largest of such powers. Good business-writing is reduced to the simplicity of any ordinary mechanical art which all can acquire. Ornamental writing is a different affair, and of course gives scope for more display of genius or special ability.

In this single course of practice, which occupies some six weeks of three hours per day, or a similar number of hours differently distributed, every distinct element of writing has been executed by the learner no less than *twenty thousand times*; the habit of the hand is thoroughly confirmed, and that style of manuscript acquired which will remain through life, and can at once be applied to all the ordinary purposes of the art. We have seen an ordinary school copy-book of thirty-two pages, written through and through, by a little girl taught on this system, in the presence of a large committee of teachers, in two hours and a half, the writing not simply good, but elegant!

It is not the purpose of this article to make an exposition of the principles of the system in detail. Its characteristics may be summed up in sort, as follows:—

1. It unites the elements of **RAPIDITY** with that of **EXCELLENCE** in the forms of the letters, and teaches both at the same time.

2. It renders success and accuracy in the art, an **INEVITABLE** result, to all who submit to the conditions and go faithfully through the practice, *thus rendering possible to all*, the acquisition of an art heretofore regarded as depending in a high degree upon the possession of some peculiar natural talent.

3. It can be taught with great ease by the teacher, to very large classes, consisting even of several hundreds, as he has no need of giving special attention to the details of what the pupils are doing. They can hardly go wrong. He has only to observe that they continue industriously to pursue their practice, and even this has in it so much of attraction that the scholars delight in competing with each other.

4. It can be acquired by the use of simple directions without the aid of a teacher, by those who are no longer at school.

The use of this system of writing in the schools of New York, Brooklyn, Philadelphia, Boston, and other localities, has come quite up to the theoretic statements of its merits. Teachers and those who are spending time and means upon the endeavor to acquire the necessary art of writing cannot afford to be ignorant of the great advantages which this valuable improvement puts in their way. The attention of educationists every where is solicited.

In connection with the above, we may say to gentlemen in the trade, that the general introduction of MacLaurin's System of Penmanship, which we fully anticipate, both from its intrinsic merits, and from its rapidly growing popularity, will relieve them from an immense burden which they have all experienced, in the necessity for lumbering their shelves with the books of numerous conflicting systems. The onerous mass of confusion introduced into a branch of their business, by the absence of any one system of sufficient merit to displace all others, will, we believe, soon be removed. To forward this certainly desirable end, and to render the change complete, we have in preparation a complementary series by Mr. MacLaurin, of all varieties of copy-books and plain-ruled books for use in the schools, which will be furnished at the usual terms. Booksellers can help to relieve themselves, in this respect, by calling the attention of leading teachers and school-committee men to MacLaurin's system.

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From Bertram Harrison, Esq., Bancroft Institute, New York.

"For these reasons, then—its reduction of penmanship to a simple mechanical process; its immense saving of time, a most important consideration, where the period allotted to

education is so limited; the combined precision and rapidity it insures; its admirable arrangement, advancing the pupil by nicely graduated steps; and its power of enabling the worst penman to write well—I think it far superior to all other methods, and destined to acquire a wide and deserved popularity.”

From J. W. Bulkley, Principal of Williamsburg Normal School.

“The experiment commenced some weeks since in our Normal School, under your direction, has been very successful, and to the class entirely satisfactory. The class are unwilling to suspend these exercises for any other, until they shall have perfected themselves in the same.

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From Prof. A. Mills, for a long time intimately associated with the business of Education in New York.

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From a Committee appointed by the Philadelphia teachers to investigate and to witness the System in practical operation in two of the schools under their charge.

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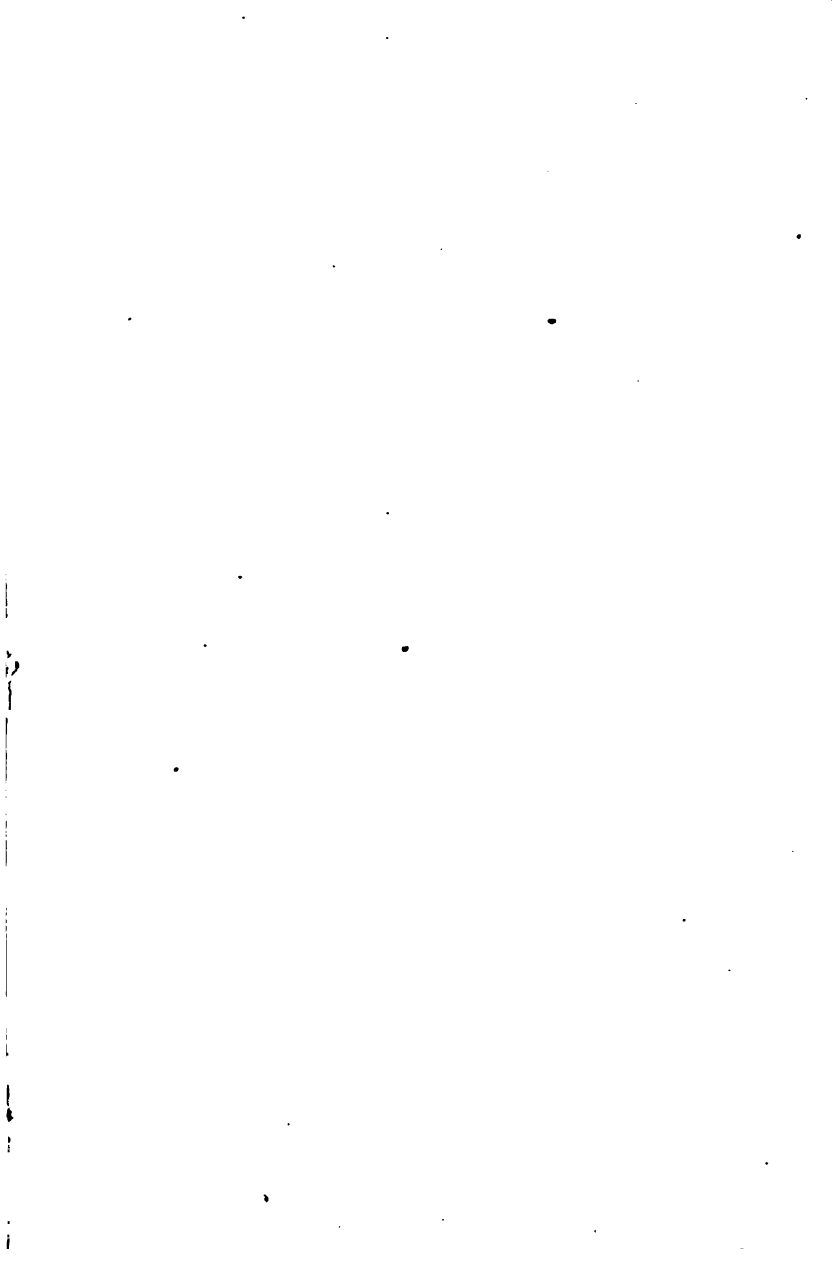
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